Dried Roses

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Dried Roses

by jiggityjams

Summary

When he was younger he had trouble interacting with normal humans- he saw too much, knew too much- and that only worsened when people learned that he was the son of a licensed necromancer.

At least now people also talked about the grey side of necromancy- thanks to a lot of PR over the years. It made sense that the FBI had one on staff, giving a voice to the dead.

That didn't change the way people looked at the Graham family. At Will. He couldn't blame them. There were rumors that the magic stained the practitioner's soul, and he came from a long, proud line of sorcerers.

He believed that the magic could grow darker over the generations.

He certainly felt cursed.

It's been nearly twenty years since he last saw Hannibal. He had been hoping to never open that door again but with bodies piling up the FBI needs all the help they can get- and they're not giving him an option.

Notes

Hello again, I hope this story finds you well!

Please mind the tags! Will meets Hannibal when he is 16 but there is no romance until he is well into his adult years.

I've had this idea bouncing around in my head since last year and now it's time for it to pay rent. The stars have aligned and I give you the first chapter of my necromancer story~

All That Glitters

20 years ago

Rain pelted against Hannibal's umbrella as human and supernatural beings alike hurried past him, seeking shelter inside the auditorium. He had intended to follow suit- more so to get away from the little sunlight that filtered through the rain clouds- when something peculiar caught his eye.

Across the parking lot, partially obscured by hedges and crouched under an umbrella, someone's child was playing with a dead animal.

Perplexed, he found himself already halfway across the parking lot and onto the lawn's gravel laid path towards the boy. From here he could see that it was indeed a dead dog but what the boy was doing he still couldn't tell, his back to Hannibal.

Dressed in a tailored suit he must have belonged to a conference attendee, yet there he was alone, his curls casting a dark halo around his head.

The vampire's curiosity would cost him a pair of shoes but he pressed forward through the mud to get a better angle- and was met with the unmistakable smell of fresh human blood.

As tantalizing as the smell was, it paled in comparison to a rotted little paw twitching- tendons and ligaments visible as they flexed beneath patches of skin and fur.

"That's a good girl… It's okay." The whole corpse shuttered and began to move in earnest, back legs kicking out, then the front ones. Like a newborn calf, it wobbled a bit on its way up before finding stability- and then turned its head in Hannibal's direction.

Despite the fact that the eye sockets had been empty for quite some time, they were now filled with a toxic purple light. It was a stark contrast to the white of it's teeth as the mangy corpse started snarling at him.

The boy- adolescent- shot up and moved back in a defensive stance, his left hand glowing the same purple aura as the dog's eyes, in his right he held a pocket knife. Bright blue eyes flashed with deadly intent.

"I hope you brought a change of shoes." Hannibal remarked as he glanced down at those equally muddy loafers.

The young man only blinked. The dog stepped between them, the magic suddenly having a firmer hold on the once shambling mound of bones and fur.

“If I’m not mistaken, necromancy is still illegal here in the states.” He prodded.

He balled his fists but the aura receded some. Blood was smeared on the inside of his left palm.

“She was lonely.” He said quietly before his hand finally relaxed. The magic anchoring the soul to its rotting coil released its hold and she crumbled back down to rest. With a flick, the knife closed and he shoved it into the pocket of his slacks.

“And you could catch a cold, hold on.” Tucking his umbrella under an arm, the man opened his thick coat and produced a handkerchief from his breast pocket with one hand and carefully extended the other. “May I?”

Dark brows furrowed but after a pause he finally offered his wounded palm up for Hannibal’s inspection- those keen eyes staying locked on his face, prepared for anything.

The former surgeon started dabbing at the shallow cut but couldn’t stop himself from tutting in disapproval at the array of little scars littering tan skin, a trail leading up under his sleeve.

“You can’t say shit.” The teenager snapped defensively.

Sighing, he relinquished his hold on the gangly youth. “There’s no need for that kind of language, blood magic isn’t good for one's life span.” But it was an impressive display of power. What took some sorcerers complex rituals and incantations to complete this young man just pulled off to bring back a dog- because she had been lonely.

“Yeah?” He huffed. “Are you dead or alive? Pick *one* leech.”

Fascinating.

“Strong words coming from the one comforting a zombie dog.”

That earned an indignant blush.

Hannibal opened his coat again and pulled out the field first aid kit he kept stashed in the lining. Using his thumb to pop open the case, he procured a bandage and handed it to the teenager.

The offering was cautiously accepted, but apparently he couldn’t stop himself from asking, “Why does a vampire need band aids?”

Click, he tucked the case away. “Humans tend to be accident prone creatures. Someone’s bound to bleed at any event- making any attending fledglings uncomfortable.”

“You’re not.” Blue eyes glanced up at him from under full lashes as he fiddled with the wrapper.

Tilting his sunglasses down, maroon irises met blue. “Control comes with age. It wouldn’t be polite to assault someone simply because they gave themselves a papercut.”

He glanced away as he smoothed the bandage over the cut. "… Thank you."

"You're welcome. I'm sure she appreciated someone checking on her."

"Will?" A gruff voice called out from a quickly approaching figure. "What the hell are you doing out here?"

"Pops-" Grimacing, the teenager looked up and started to explain himself.

Beauregard Graham immediately cut him off as he joined them. "Don't 'Pops' me, boy. You're always wandering off…" He shook his head but trailed off as he turned that dark glare towards the interloper.

It seemed the father had passed on his dark halo of curls to his son, perhaps those blue eyes came from his mother?

"Dr. Hannibal Lecter," He held out his leather gloved hand for a shake. "My companion and I are looking forward to hearing your talk later, Agent Graham."

Brown eyes widened as the only licensed necromancer in the U.S. stepped closer to clasp their hands together. "Wait, Lecter? You mean the *Count* Lecter?"

"The very same, but I do prefer to go by my earned title of Doctor. I caught the smell of blood and came to see that all was well."

The other man took in the crumbled corpse at his son's feet, his lips pressed in a hard line. "I apologize for my son worrying you, Dr. Lecter, but I'll take it from here."

Will scowled at the crowded parking lot- at the audience his father had attracted, then turned and stomped off towards a side entrance.

"It was no bother. I heard the Graham line was filled with phenomenal sorcerers and your son is no exception."

He nodded gravely. "There's a reason the FBI has kept us on payroll for so long. Now, if you'll excuse me I need to speak with my boy… Enjoy the conference."

"I intend to." He inclined his head in turn as the necromancer turned and followed his son's trail, tension visible in his movements.

When they were out of sight, Hannibal finally returned to his vehicle to fetch a clean pair of shoes, storing the muddy pair in a plastic bag.

"There you are." Alana Bloom, protected under a floral print umbrella and dressed in a fetching purple dress, approached him. Her concerned frown melted away as she looked him over, relieved to see he was in one piece. "I was starting to think something had happened to you, you're never late."

"My apologies, I ran into a colleague." He shut the trunk closed and offered his mentee the crook of his arm, "I promise dinner will make up for it. Now, let's get out of this rain."

Consoled, the witch tugged him in the direction of the amphitheater. “Thank you again for coming with me to this conference, Hannibal.”

“Naturally, I know you’ve been contemplating a change in career paths.”

Her laugh was a soft chime in the night compared to the crowds of people milling about in the lobby. “Maybe not a complete change, I’ve been looking more into just consulting. I’d like to start my own practice and who’s to say I can’t have it all?”

“Of course,” he squeezed her hand as he guided them to their seats in the top row, “You have all the time in the world to decide.”

“Maybe not as much time as you, but still!” Reaching for her purse, she pulled out a pamphlet and read off some of the speakers. “They don’t just have a necromancer profiler- there’s also werewolf investigators, shapeshifting sketch artists, *and* there's a witch in charge of the crime scene investigation unit! I know it’s a far from perfect organization, but there’s something beautiful about all of these beings coming together and putting their abilities together to save lives.”

He returned her smile, letting her stay in her rosy bubble. “Perhaps we can find her afterwards and pick her mind?”

“Thank you Hannibal.” She sighed, utterly charmed, before snapping her fingers and summoning a notepad.

A companionable silence fell upon them as the seats filled around them and Alana wrote down her questions, giving him just enough time to consider his earlier encounter.

What kind of sorcerer would Will Graham become?

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“… In conclusion, necromancy is no longer in the dark ages- we are stepping into the light and we are giving voice to the voiceless. Thank you for your time.”

Hannibal was one of the first in the crowd to stand and clap. Though the auditorium was full, and others in the audience joined his applause, he could still feel someone’s gaze. Curious, he turned his head.

Down in the front row, while the rest of the audience clapped for his father, Will Graham was staring at him.

Hannibal waved.

It was hesitant, but he returned the gesture.
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Burned Bridges

Chapter Notes

> Holy crap this chapter is finally done! I have been slowly chipping away at this almost everyday… for months. Trying to find the right words, getting everything to line up just right. Some days I added maybe 2 words, on better days maybe full paragraphs, but I'm so happy to present to you the next installment!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Present Day

Will had always found it strange that humans were more accepting of vampires than necromancers.

They had more in common than a lot of people realized, and yet, vampirism was seen as a terrible gift and necromancy was considered an affront to nature, the practice of it punishable by death.

When he was younger he had trouble interacting with normal humans- he saw too much, *knew* too much- and that only worsened when people learned that he was the son of a licensed necromancer.

His family dealt in the business of death.

Magic so dark it ripped souls from the afterlife and imprisoned them in decaying corpses. Who hadn't heard a story about a necromancer's zombie hoard? It was no wonder the practice was outlawed.

At least now people also talked about the grey side of necromancing- thanks to a lot of PR over the years. It made sense that the FBI had a necromancer on staff, giving a voice to the dead.

That didn't change the way people looked at the Graham family. At Will. He couldn't blame them. There were rumors that the magic stained the practitioner's soul, and he came from a long, proud line of sorcerers.

Will believed that the magic could get darker over the generations.

He certainly felt cursed as he stared up at the "angel" hanging from the rafters above him in the small church. The man's back had been flayed open, his lungs and skin pulled out and away from the body to give the illusion of wings.

“Do you believe in God?” Beverly asked softly as she snapped a photo. He hadn’t heard her approach but no one else on her team ever made much of an effort to be near him.

Rows of fish hooks had been driven through the edges of the poor man’s skin while thin clear wire suspended him in the air above the pastor’s lectern. Will felt nauseous but that wasn’t really new. “Which one?” He half joked.

“Is that confirmation that there are multiple gods?” Katz stepped closer and snapped photos of the corpse’s feet.

“I get why you’re asking me, but I’m afraid I don’t have the answer either. All I know is I want to be cremated.” He admitted as he walked around the small stage to check out the work on the blood eagle. Despite the mutilation there wasn’t a drop of blood on the body or the floor.

“You talk to the dead on a regular basis but you can’t give me any heads up about life after death? Lame.” She leaned in closer, frowning. “You smell that?”

“Yeah, smells like disinfectant? The perp was pretty meticulous about their mutilation of a corpse. Do we have an ID on the victim yet?” At first glance, Will saw no bite marks on his neck- but there were small incisions above both the man’s clavicles.

“Father Daniel Livington, Jack is interviewing the guy who found him. He’s the third clergy member in this area to go missing- but he’s the *first* one to be returned. Hold on…” She reached into the pocket of her FBI windbreaker and pulled out a pair of tweezers. WIth a steady hand she plucked a piece of fuzz that had been snagged on the nail of the big toe. “Gotcha.”

He raised a brow. “Think you can get a location off that?”

She shot him a look as she bagged the evidence. “Gee thanks for the vote of confidence.”

An awkward shrug. “I mean, if any one could do it, you could?”

“Better.” She smirked. “Divining isn’t an exact science, but it might get us closer to a secondary location.”

Directing his attention to the victim’s thigh to avoid her eyes he frowned when he saw another small incision. “You see these? The perp made a couple in the neck too.”

She snapped a couple of photos. “Looks like they were aiming for major veins and arteries.”

“Looking to drain the body. Guess vampires aren’t off the table then. ” His lips thinned. The bureau only called him in for *human* casualties- he did not work with the undead and depending on how supernatural the soul, they tended to be too stubborn to allow themselves to be summoned.

“It *would* be nice if all vampires stuck to the legal blood banks.” She dug into a pocket and handed him a small note pad. “Here’s Jack’s list of questions.”

“Paying people to donate blood isn't good enough for some of them. They enjoy the hunt too much. We’ll just have to ask Father Livingston here what he remembers.” Flipping to the middle of the pages, he skimmed through the scribbled notes.

Bev cocked a brow. “There are some good vampires out there. I mean some of those blood donors get pretty cush deals.”

He grimaced. “Yeah, like a pet.” He shuddered and handed her back the notebook. Per Jack’s notes, Father Livingston’s wife reported him missing 18 hours ago, the morning after he didn’t come home from his sermon. He was the latest to go missing, and the only one that’s been displayed.

The agent stepped away, giving him space to work. He slipped his glasses off and put them in one of his slack pockets, then moved his other hand into the pocket he kept the razor blade he always had with him, slicing his index finger.

He didn’t notice any pain as he went through the motions of clapping his hands together, a purple aura filled the space and his necronomicon materialized in front of him. Bound in a purple leather of unknown origin, the cover had no title- just an eye that lazily opened, acknowledged his face, then flipped open to the spell he needed.

With a wave of his hand and a muttered incantation, the angel began to glow and before it Father Livingston’s spirit aperated, pulled from the other side of the veil.

The soul’s eyelids fluttered open, bug eyed, he looked around. “Wh-what?”

“Hello, My name is Will Graham.” He flashed his badge. “Special agent, necromancer. I’m investigating your murder. Can you help me find the one who killed you?”

“What the hell man? H-How did I get here?” The man squeaked and moved to look over his shoulder.

Will clapped his hands together, demanding the soul’s attention. “Don’t do that. If your soul sees your body, you’ll be doomed to eternal anguish. Instead, help me catch the bastard that did this to you.”

He stared down at his transparent hands, a purple aura misting around him as the magic anchored him to the living’s plane of existence.

“What’s your name?” He tried again, a touch softer.

“Daniel… Daniel Livingston- Oh god, have you talked to my wife?” He begged to know.

Fuck. He always hated this part, but was too numb to flinch. “She will be notified we found you. Daniel, what was the last thing you remember?”

His brow furrowed. “I-I remember waking up on a cold table… and there was a weird chemical smell? It burned my nose, and and, oh god there was *screaming* , I could hear them!”

The others were still alive? Bev was quickly scribing the interview. “You’re doing great, Daniel. Where were the screams coming from? Did you see anyone?”

“They sounded far away, I-I couldn’t see anything. They were calling for help.”

The smart ones always made this more difficult. “You said you woke up on a cold table? Were you alone?”

A sob tore through his empty chest, shaking his head. “No, no I wasn’t alone. He was there- he, he said he was going to help me ascend. He said *God* chose me.”

“I’m sorry Daniel. I really am. What did he do to you?” Will felt warm blood drip down his lip as his nose began to bleed.

“He was *pumping* me dry!” He shouted. “I could hear the machine! My veins were burning!”

Will could tell he was losing the man- freshly dead spirits were the worst to deal with. They hadn’t had enough time to process the most final of life stages. “Did you see his face? Do you have any idea who did this?”

“I-I-I don’t know… wait, that voice! His voice!” The pastor shouted, then his face twisted in horror. “What about my *daughter* ? I was supposed to pick her up!”

“Who’s voice?” He tried to keep control of the conversation but it was too late, the man stopped making sense, babbling on in a rush. Will wiped away the blood that had begun to pool in his eyes. “Daniel, Daniel I need you to stay with me, whose voice did you hear?”

Father Livingston turned around- and a blood curdling scream echoed in the room, ripped from the pits of hell itself.

“Damn it.” Will muttered as he shut his necronomicon with an abrupt sweeping motion of his hand. The poor bastard dissipated, the anchor cut. Silence fell around them.

Father Livingston’s cold dead face looked down on him, judging him.

He wiped his arm over his face again- his shirt was already stained anyway. “Fuck. Where’s Jack?”

“He should be outside, but after that scream-” Her brows drew together, concern written all over her face.

“What the hell was that?!” Jack boomed as he and a few agents rushed in. Will didn’t know *what* Jack Crawford was, all he knew was that the man was hard to kill.

“Our victim was feeling a little… overwhelmed.” He said flatly. “Anyone got a towel?”

“Were you able to get anything useful out of him?” The head of the BAU asked gruffly as he handed him a red rag.

Agent Katz assured their boss Will wasn't entirely useless. "We know that the perp sounded like a male and that wherever the victim was taken, the perp tried to drain him dry."

"He also felt burning in his veins. The question is, what was the perp replacing his blood with?" Avoiding eye contact, he wiped his face clean.

Jimmy Price's chipper voice chimed in. "We'll run an analysis when we get him back to the lab."

"Jack, he heard people screaming for help. The other victims might still be alive…"

"That's good work Will." Jack clapped him on the back. Beauregard Graham had always spoken fondly of the possible immortal, and after working with him for a few years now himself, Will could understand why they got along.

They were both people who believed the end justifies the means.

"Uh huh. Water?" He spat out a bloody luggy into the rag.

"First off, ew." Bev walked over and handed him a water bottle.

The necromancer grumbled a "Thanks."

The head of the BAU stepped away, reaching for a nearby agent. "Has Alana arrived yet?"

The chief of the investigation unit leaned over and eyed him suspiciously while he tried to drink away the taste of blood. "Have you been sleeping?"

"Necromancers don't sleep." He lied, though his father used to work late into the morning hours and continued the habit until his death.

The last time he had spoken to his father was well before his demise… he had memories of his father speaking to his grandfather a few times after *that* crazy bastard kicked the bucket, but Will had been sure to spread his father's ashes in Louisiana. The least he could do was take his father home.

Bev wasn't done being a mother hen, apparently. "Have you considered taking sleeping pills?"

By the handful. "They stopped working." He chugged the rest of the water. "You sound like Alana."

"Who sounds like me?"

Speak of the devil. "Hi Alana." He offered her a wave as she made her way over to them, her brows furrowed in disapproval per usual. It was kind of nice someone was bothered by the amount of blood loss Will regularly was subjected to.

"I was just telling him he needs more sleep." Bev stepped out of Alana's way as the psychiatrist crouched in front of him, checking his face.

“I’m glad someone else is. You’re still human, Will. How long did you hold the spell?” She asked as she placed her hand over his face.

Comforting warmth spread from her hand as she healed the burst blood vessels in his face. “Not long. I wasn’t counting… Thanks for the hand.”

She offered him a sympathetic smile. “Anytime.” She glanced down at the blood on his sleeve with mild disapproval, but she tried to hide it behind the smile.

“Katz, let’s wrap things up here,” Jack ordered, strutting down the central aisle towards the group. “Get your team working on this, I want possible locations before sunrise.”

“On it. ” Bev nodded, flipping through the notes.

He then turned his attention to the necromancer. “Do you think you’ll be able to summon him again?”

Will shrugged and stood up. “We can give it a try but I would recommend giving it a few days. The guy’s been through a lot.”

The man nodded, and dismissed the sorcerer with a wave, his job done. “I’ll call you when we have an update or if we need another summoning.”

It had been a long enough day, thank fuck it was over. Or at least, he thought it was as he headed out to his car.

“Will?” Bev called as she jogged up to him.

He dropped his hand from the driver side door handle and raised a brow. “Yeah? Does Jack want that summoning now?”

She stopped a couple of feet from him and shoved her hands into her jacket pockets. “I need a bagel and some coffee, do *you* want a bagel and some coffee?”

He frowned. “Don’t you have work to do?”

She didn’t back down. “Yeah, but I won’t be able to get anything done on an empty stomach. I heard there’s a good shop near here.”

Despite his usual reluctance, he said yes. He’d never been one to grab lunch with his coworkers, but today was the exception.

The place wasn’t so bad- a little too hipster for his taste, but he did order an everything bagel. Having solid food and not just coffee actually settled his stomach a little. Huh, who would have thought.

“So, your weird spellbook-” She started.

“My Necronomicon?” He supplied

“Yeah, that one. Is it, like, *alive* ?”

He sipped his coffee. “Define living.” He paused, then elaborated. “It won’t open for anyone else, it recognizes my face.”

“Does it have a name?”

“Uh. No. I don’t really… talk to it.”

She pursed her lips. “It recognizes you but you haven’t named him?”

He deflected the answer. He’d never been very warm to his spellbook. “Why do you assume the book is male? It’s clearly a ‘they’.”

She snorted a laugh. “Of course, my mistake…” Katz trailed off. “Can I ask you something else?”

He paused, looked up at her- or well, her very safe eyebrow. “Yes?”

“Is it true what you said? Is that guy’s soul damned because he turned around?” Bev asked, eyeing him seriously. “I haven’t heard you give that warning before.”

He snorted. “No, the dead just don’t like seeing their own mutilated corpses. It’s hard getting them to stop screaming once they get started.”

Her disturbed expression said enough. “You okay bud?” She lightly punched his shoulder.

“Yeah, yeah.” He grumbled, running a shaky hand through his hair. “Just tired. I should… get home. Feed the dogs.”

She offered a soft smile and patted his shoulder. “Take it easy tonight, okay? You’ve earned it. I have to head back to headquarters, but make sure you get yourself something decent for dinner, yeah?”

Pity or disgust. Those were the feelings Will Graham garnered from others.

He hid his grimace behind a smile and muttered an affirmative. She meant well, after all.

It was a long drive home.

Wolf trap was off the beaten path and that's the main reason why he bought the property. No neighbors around to ask about the weird lights at odd hours in the night. Pulling up to the dark house he felt the weight of the world slide off his shoulders.

Cutting the engine, Will rested his forehead on the wheel of his car and closed his eyes. In the quiet of the night he could hear Baxter start to bark at the front door, his usual routine when his master returned home.

Eyes still closed, the necromancer reached out and checked the various wards scattered throughout the property and-

There was some *thing* in the house. It didn't have a heartbeat.

" *Fuuuuuck* ." He hissed, hands tightening around the steering wheel.

Winston's deep bark joined Baxter's yipping, feeling his master's panic.

He leaned over and popped open the glove compartment, digging through receipts and random shit until he found it.

A simple gold band crowned with a gilded molar.

He slipped the ring onto his finger and braced himself. Today just wasn't his fucking day.

He hopped out of his car, walked to the door, unlocked it and threw it open.

All of the dogs except for Winston rushed out through his legs, jumping around him excitedly before running off to do their business. Winston was still in one piece, the rune on his collar aglow in the dark room as he snarled at Hannibal Lecter, who was standing in the kitchen, the countertop littered with glass bottles, pouring out a bottle of whiskey into the sink.

"Good evening, WIll." He said innocently, like he hadn't been haunting the necromancer's nightmares for the past few years.

"Get out of my house." He growled.

A light brow quirked up. "I apologize for the intrusion, but your liver will thank me."

"I told you I never wanted to see you again."

He smiled softly. "It's good to see you as well."

Will wasn't buying it. The golden molar lit the room with a ghostly glow as Winston stepped between them, snarling. "How dare you break into my home and go through my shit." Will backed away farther into the living room, keeping space between them. The vampire could cross the room and snap his neck before he could even blink- he wasn't going to leave himself open to an attack.

Hannibal removed the now empty bottle from the sink and reached for the next one, unscrewing it and tipping the contents down the drain. "Perhaps you should invest in more secure windows." He mused, tilting his head slightly as those maroon eyes looked him over like he was a juicy steak. "In any case, I left you some money for groceries-"

"I don't want your fucking money." He snapped.

Unfazed, the other man continued. "I'm sure you would have thrown everything away if I had brought you groceries, but please do consider filling your fridge with more than just fish and frozen peas."

"I said get out." He growled, before biting the side of his tongue. With his blood flowing forth, he summoned the owner of the molar- he knew the personal trainer turned serial killer

would turn out to be useful eventually and some people deserved sentences that extended after death. Quintin Jones was a hulking figure, even in death- despite being transparent.

“My, that is impressive. How long have you been working on that spell?” The bastard asked as the spectre stalked towards him.

“God you still never shut up.” He grumbled.

Hannibal offered him another smile. “Will, I know I frightened you-“ Quinten landed a solid punch to the vampire's nose. He stumbled back in surprise- a hand reaching up to touch the black blood that dripped from his broken nose.

It felt good knowing he could injure the blood sucker, even if the bones were already healing. “Frightened me? Get over yourself. You could have gotten us both thrown in prison- I know you’re the reason Miriam disappeared, you parasite!”

The former surgeon tried to reset his nose, but the soul began corralling him towards the front door. “I wouldn’t have let that happen- I made sure nothing could be traced back-”

“This is your last warning- stay out of my life!” He shouted as the ghost threw him out of the open door, slamming it closed behind him.

Through the door, he could hear the vampire say “Will… I’m sorry.”

The planks of the front porch creaked as the vampire turned and walked away. He released the spell but kept the ring on.

There was no guarantee the bastard had actually left so Will went to grab a half empty bottle of whiskey the asshole hadn’t gotten to yet. As his hand wrapped around the neck of the bottle he noticed that under the small stack of one hundred dollar bills Hannibal had left there was also a pamphlet for the Baltimore Supernatural History museum.

Deciding he didn’t care enough to investigate, he headed down to the basement he had converted into a panic room- the second reason he had purchased this property. The blast resistant door wouldn’t be able to stop a persistent vampire but it would buy him time.

The walls were bare except for a single switch on the back wall. He sat down on the cot pushed against the wall while the dogs piled in with him, Winston curling up on the foot of the cot while the others laid around him. There was a single lamp sitting on the floor that he switched on.

He took a long swig of whiskey and settled in for a long night.

Chapter End Notes

Some of Will’s dialogue was updated towards the end~ Thank you for you eyes ♥
Comments, kudos, bookmarks are always appreciated ♥

Silence is Golden

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

20 Years ago

"FUCK!" An irate shout echoed through the trees lining the deserted country road.

Hannibal had just been about to shut the trunk of his burner car, wrapping up a successful night of hunting. New to the area, he'd taken his time to scout out his hunting range, and had been very careful to pick a secluded road. A cemetary was the only significant place nearby, but that seemed to be where the voice originated from.

He glanced down at his watch. It was two in the morning, well after the cemetery had locked it's gates for the night.

Engrossed, he sidestepped and retrieved the small black bag he kept in the rear side door, just in case his prey woke up while he was away. He pulled out a syringe and a small vial of tranquilizer, and gave the rude man an injection to keep him out- he didn't need another kicked out tail light.

Assured he had bought himself a few hours, he shut the trunk and locked the car before he set out towards the voice. There was a second voice, though it was so quiet the words were indistinct, just a few soft murmurs, then a beat of silence.

A grumbled. "Damn it lady… "

As he neared the wrought iron fence he could smell the light trace of fire, could put a face to the voice. Hopping the fence, he kept to the shadows and foliage, following the sound of Will practicing farther in. When he found him he was knelt in front of a grave covered in overgrown vines and surrounded by a ring of white powder, lit candles on either side of him. Hannibal crouched behind a small hill, watching the young sorcerer concentrate over the tombstones.

The young man wiped away blood that was dripping down his nose before he sighed loudly. "Why can't I get this?" He asked himself- or perhaps his book.

Those bright blue irises burned with frustration as he read through a passage in the floating purple spellbook- whose *eye* opened, at first lazily, then snapping open and darting straight in the vampire's direction. The pages of the book began flipping rapidly in Will's face, disrupting him.

“Hey!” The young man sputtered, jerking away from the book, turned and squinted in the direction of the vampire. “Who’s there?” He demanded and at once disappeared the tome with a wave of his hand.

“Hello Will.” He greeted as he rose from his spot, stepped onto the path and headed towards him, looking around the empty graveyard. “Does your father know you’re here at this hour?”

He leaned over and blew out the candles around him, leaving them alone in the dark under the full moon. Could he even see?

“Count Lecter? Yes he knows,” he said much too quickly as he stood up, dressed in a black hoodie and jeans, he dusted off his knees. “I was just finishing up.”

“Did you walk here?” He stopped a few feet from him. There hadn’t been another car in the gravel parking lot, but glancing down at his shoes wasn’t very informative. His sneakers were well worn and scuffed up unlike the dress shoes he had worn the last they met.

“I took the bus… Why are *you* out here?” He crossed his arms over his chest, turning the attention back onto the vampire.

He cracked a smile. “I’ve been contemplating buying property in the area and I like to know my territory.”

“Then why were you hiding over there?” He raised a brow.

“You looked like you were trying to focus, I didn’t mean to interrupt your concentration.” Looking down at the circle of salt, he memorized the peculiar runes that had been painstakingly arranged.

“Oh. It’s fine.” He rubbed the back of his neck, his gaze darting to the side, perhaps embarrassed that he’d been caught struggling?

“I would advise you not to be out so late on your own, you never know what could be creeping in the shadows.”

The teenager snorted and shrugged. “No offense, but I’d pity the creature who tried to attack a necromancer in a cemetery…” He tilted his head. “You’re alone too, aren’t you? I heard you don’t belong to a coven?”

“You heard correctly, my sire had no other surviving fledglings. Now that he is gone I am the last of our bloodline.” He did enjoy his rare freedom, away from grating covens filled with extended kin that most vampires tended to find themselves in.

“How old are you?” The teenager asked curiously.

The corner of his lips quirked up. “It’s rude to ask an immortal their age, Will.”

Grimacing, he grumbled. “Sorry Count Lecter…”

Something about his discomfort didn't sit well with Hannibal. He couldn't explain the desire to wipe away that disheartened look but found himself making an offer. "Please, call me Hannibal... I suppose I could tell you where I'm from, for a price."

Those blue eyes looked him over inquisitively. "What price?"

"My place of origin for a look at your spellbook." The tome was an oddity, he'd never seen one quite like it before- and he'd known a large number of sorcerers.

His face lit up. "Deal." He produced his pocket knife and pricked his thumb. With a muttered cantation he resummoned the purple book. It's eye opened and looked at its master then glanced at Hannibal. Will made a swiping gesture and the book turned and floated towards him.

The spellbook squinted at him suspiciously. "Marvelous." He didn't risk touching it, but he did bend down to look at the binding and pages. "Do you write down every spell you learn?"

"Yeah, that's basically how it works. Where are you from?" He dispersed the spell, sending the tome away with a puff of magic.

"I'm from a Baltic tribe originally, from what is now Lithuania. My mother tongue has been dead for some time now, though it predated the English language as you know it."

His eyes widened into saucers. "You're older than the English language? Uh… do you ever get bored?"

He chuckled. "Do you want to hear another secret?"

Leaning in closer, the sorcerer nodded conspiratorially. "Yeah?"

"Any immortal that gets bored of this beautiful world is a fool and a charlatan- who needs to leave their manor more often."

The young man snorted a laugh. "Really? I've met plenty of vampires like that."

Pleased to hear his laugh, he continued. "If I get bored I move. I've lived all over the world- but after a few decades everything changes. You humans are so industrious, there is always something new to behold, if one goes looking for it. Have you traveled much, Will?"

"Huh, I'll take your word for it… Lately I've only been traveling for my FBI apprenticeship." He shrugged, shoving his hands into his hoodie pocket. "We're usually looking for the gruesome, not the beautiful."

"Stay on the lookout next time you're traveling, I promise you'll find it." Smiling, he checked his watch and hummed. "The last bus has surely already returned to the station, do you need a ride home?"

He shuffled his feet. "I'd hate to be a bother."

“It’s no bother at all, there’s plenty of time before the sun rises. I wouldn’t be able to forgive myself if something happened to you on your walk home.” He rested a hand over his heart and bowed formally.

Will’s crooked smile was endearing. “Well, I guess it’s okay. It’ll be a bit of a drive though.”

He returned the smile with his own warmth. “Then we’d better get going. Mind your footing, yes?” He turned and headed towards the gates. “I parked farther into the woods, try not to trip.”

“Yeah yeah…” He hummed as he followed, keeping to the path. “Thanks, I appreciate the lift.”

“Think nothing of it, Will. It’s rare I find myself in such pleasant company.”

His steps were surprisingly light for a human.

When they neared the gates he spoke up. “Do you have any fledglings?”

Hannibal chuckled as he reached through the bars and easily broke the locked chain holding the gate closed. “No, I’ve never had the inclination to change anyone. Do you have any siblings?” He held the entrance open for the sorcerer, letting him pass first.

He nodded in thanks. “Nah, only child. Don’t think my Pops wanted any more kids. How long have you been in the States?”

Letting the gate swing shut behind them, together they set off down the road. “I arrived just before the Civil war and ended up serving as a surgeon shortly after the battle of Bull Run.”

Looking over his shoulder the young man eyed him quizzically. “Which side were you on?”

“A fair question. I served on the side of the Union. Are you currently enrolled in school?”

A grimace this time. “I’m currently homeschooled. Been working on college prep lately. Of all the places you’ve been, which is your favorite?” He changed the topic before Hannibal could ask follow up questions. Perhaps his peers weren’t very accepting of a necromancer- a pity really.

He went along with it. “I couldn’t name a favorite, there are a number of places I’ve visited that have left an impression on me. One of my favorite places is Kyoto, specifically the Pure Water Temple. Three streams flow from the mountain above the temple and they say each stream will give you a blessing from the gods- one will bring you longevity, the other grants success in business, and lastly success in love.”

Lady Murasaki had taken him so long ago now… The memory no longer held the sting it once did.

“Huh. Guess you must have chosen the longevity one?”

“You guessed correctly- longevity and success in business are the two I choose. Drinking from all three is generally frowned upon- they say you will be cursed by the gods for your greed. Here we are.” Pulling his keys from his pocket he walked over and unlocked the passengers’ door and opened it for Will.

The young man shot him a look before sliding in. “You just left your car parked on the side of the road?”

Hannibal took his time walking to the drivers’ side, waiting to answer until he was seated. “I was doing some scouting. It’s important to know who your neighbors are and where your territory ends and theirs begins. There’s a werewolf pack not too far from here- be careful not to cross onto their land.” He cautioned as he started the car, the engine humming to life.

Buckled in, the young man instructed him to pull a U-turn. “Yeah, I know they’re there. Sometimes they work with the FBI- if there’s something in it for them.”

The road flew by as they continued their chat, Will occasionally interrupting to give direction. Upon reaching the modest one story house, down another isolated country road, the sorcerer instructed him to drop him off on the side of the road instead of taking him down the winding driveway. There was no car parked out front and from where he sat he could hear nothing to suggest another living being was home.

The young man unbuckled his seatbelt and moved to hop out of the car. “Thanks again, Hannibal, this definitely beat walking home alone.”

The vampire returned the sentiment graciously. “And I enjoyed our conversation, Will. I hope you have pleasant dreams.”

“You too- er-” He cracked a smile and scratched the back of his head. “I mean, have a good morning. Bye.”

Hannibal didn’t pull away until he was assured the sorcerer was safe inside, then began the long trek back to his own sanctuary, his thoughts drifting to meal prep.

Chapter End Notes

Dang, I bet Hannibal’s wishing he’d had the blessing for a better love life lol

I have actually been to the temple mentioned above and it is one of the most beautiful sights I’ve ever seen- but uuuuuh I didn’t drink from any of the streams. There was a long line and I was too busy shopping for omamori charms- beautifully embroidered “amulets” that are often sold at temples/shrines~

It Takes Two

Chapter Notes

I LIVE! I hope you are doing well.

I didn't really mean to be gone this long… I've had ¾ of this chapter done for a few months but I lost my writing mojo. Life was weird for a bit. I was having issues at work so I quit, but quitting didn't really help my mental health. I mean, it certainly didn't hurt, but I think the weight of the past couple of years crept up on me and that coupled with having cabin fever from being stuck at home for too long equaled an interesting mental state… But as we creep into the new year, I am hopeful for better times ahead. I moved to a new town with my partner and the change of scenery has done me good. I'm closer to my siblings and I'm gonna start job hunting in January.

I do have to thank y'all, cause on a number of bad days I pulled up your comments and reading them really helped pick me up. I feel like the word "unprecedented" is getting thrown around a lot these days, but in these crazy times, I hope my writing can be of some help to y'all, because writing and getting to share my work has really helped me focus on something constructive.

Without further ado, I give you the next installment of this story <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Present day

Stay on the lookout next time you're traveling, I promise you'll find it.

Will startled awake, head whipping towards the closed blast door- his breathing erratic. Winston whined and licked his hand.

"I'm okay boy." He patted his head, trying to convince his loyal hound, but he wasn't even convincing himself.

Damn it. Why was this happening now? Rubbing his face he reached out for his phone and found he had a couple of missed calls from Jack.

Double damn it. He sighed, resting his forehead on his knees, focusing on his breathing. Maybe the whiskey had been a mistake if his phone couldn't even wake him.

Winston whined again as Baxter nudged his leg.

“Sorry guys. Let’s get the day started, huh?” He rose and unlocked the panic room door, heading up to the front door to let his dogs out. Shuffling to the kitchen he portioned out their food and started the coffee pot. The stack of money and brochure mocked him as he pointedly ignored their existence.

He texted Jack to let him know he would be on his way shortly. After a quick shower, he changed into a reasonably clean plaid shirt and slacks then headed to work.

“Yikes. Will, are you okay?” Bev raised a brow at him in the hallway leading to the forensic lab. “You look like the sandman beat you with a bat.”

Grumbling incoherently into his tumbler of coffee, he kept walking to the lab. “Jack’s messages sounded urgent. What did you find?”

She flipped through a clipboard, falling into step beside him. “The lab results came back for what was inside Father Livingston’s veins.”

“So, they embalmed him alive?” Although, he didn’t recall smelling any formaldehyde at the scene.

“They embalmed him with vampire blood. Someone was trying to change him.” She said grimly.

His lip curled in disgust. “Wow. They somehow found a way to make that whole process even worse, huh?”

“I’ve never seen anything like it.” She nodded solemnly. “Illegal changings are common enough, but this is a new level of cruelty.”

The corpse in question was laid out on a slab in the lab, covered by a white sheet.

“Well thanks for finally joining us, Graham.” Brian’s smirk was condescending at best. Will appreciated Price for quickly changing the subject.

“Our victim was filled to the brim with vampire blood, we’re currently running the attempted sire’s DNA through a few databases but so far no match has popped up.”

“He said he heard other people calling for help. What are the chances the other victims are still human?” Will asked the room.

“Not good odds,” Brian sighed. “Not everyone survives the change. Maybe our perp is trying to better his odds of having successful fledglings?”

He had to roll his eyes. “If I had a nickel for every time a vampire played god, I’d already be retired…” He glanced at Bev. “Any luck with divining a secondary location?”

“Glad you asked. We got a 10 mile radius, Jimmy’s currently working on plausible locations.” As she spoke she approached a nearby table where a large atlas was laid flat.

Picking up a crystal pendulum resting beside the map, Katz held the string over a spot that had been marked in black pen- the church where they had found their victim. The piece of fuzz that had been collected was clipped above the crystal.

Muttering the incantation, she released the string and it stayed floating above the parchment. All of a sudden the crystal seemed to come alive, darting about the map frantically before it whizzed back to the church, froze for a second, then flew to the other side of the map. It took it's time before landing on a new point, the string staying taut for a moment before finally clattering onto the table top.

The new spot had been marked with a red pen giving them their potential area to search. The diviner retrieved the crystal and tapped the red dot. "Here's where the crystal says the place of origin is. A quick search tells us that it's a warehouse district, but it could be any of the buildings in this area."

Will let out a whistle. "I'm not saying I doubted you Bev, but that's pretty impressive."

"Thanks, but you can congratulate me when we catch this bastard." Smirking, she slipped the crystal into her lab coat pocket. "Jimmy is looking into getting us a rundown of the area. Satellite imaging could give us a good idea of which warehouses are empty and from there we can request a warrant, that is of course if my divination spell can't get us a more specific location when we get boots on the ground."

"Will!" Jack's voice boomed as he pushed open the lab door. "There you are, you're late."

Brian Zeller snickered, earning a sharp side glance from the head of BAU.

The necromancer sighed. "Sorry, my phone died." The lie slipped through his lips far too easily. "Won't happen again."

"See that it doesn't. Let's talk in my office," he stepped to the side and held the door open. Will headed out to the hallway, his boss on his heels. "Bedelia Du Maurier is personally requesting your help in a missing persons case."

He blinked. Jack took long strides down the hallway, Will having to speed up to match his steps. "The head of the Du Maurier coven? She knows I can't help with missing vampires."

"Per her report, it's not just fledglings that have gone missing. A few human prospects have also been taken. This case is leading somewhere, Will."

"You think these missing people are related to our angel maker?" He clarified.

"That's what I want you to find out." He abruptly stopped at his office, took a breath, then straightened up, and opened the door, putting on a more amenable expression as he strode in. "Sorry for the wait, Doctor, this is Will Graham, our resident Necromancer."

Alana was sitting across from Jack's desk, leaning forward in her seat, offering him a kind smile, but next to her was *fucking Hannibal goddamned Lecter*. He rose from his seat, dressed in a plaid three piece suit that had far too many colors thrown together, the count

offered a warm smile and a regal nod of his head. He did not make the mistake of offering his hand for a shake, instead he politely held his sun hat- which was made in the same god awful pattern as his suit- in front of him.

“Will, this is Dr. Lecter, he has graciously accepted the role as our liaison between the FBI and the major covens of the Northeast.”

Through gritted teeth, Will spat out a harsh, “We’ve met.”

“It is good to see you again.” He remarked nonchalantly, as if he couldn’t hear the ice in the sorcerer’s words, he sat back down, while Alana and Jack both looked alarmed.

Shooting his employee a warning look, Jack walked to his desk and sat, gesturing for Will to take the remaining open seat besides Hannibal. “Good, you're already acquainted.”

In a rare display of defiance, he took to standing behind the empty chair. Jack continued on. “As I was saying, the FBI takes these missing persons reports very seriously and we will do what we can to bring those fledglings home and the perpetrators to justice. I thank you for offering to be the bridge between the covens and the bureau, we understand they generally prefer to handle these matters privately. We have already scheduled a meeting with Lady Du Maurier, and we would greatly appreciate it if you would attend with Will.”

“Oh she’s just going to *love* that.” He scoffed, knowing how much the head of the Du Maurier coven despised the Count.

Jack’s glare showed him he did not appreciate the commentary. Alana tried to catch his eye, surprised by his behavior. He kept his eyes on Jack’s desk, avoiding everyone’s gaze.

Hannibal chuckled, as if he was in on the joke. “Lady Du Maurier and I certainly do have history, but if this matter of missing fledglings turns out to be a dispute among the covens, I promise you, you will not want to be caught in the center without help. As an unbiased party I look forward to helping with the investigation.” He rested his hand over his still heart and gave what he probably thought was a reassuring smile.

Will’s lip curled in disgust. If the head of the BAU wasn’t sitting right there he would have already summoned a ghost and staked his undead ass. He wouldn’t have been surprised if the Count knew more about the missing fledglings.

“Your cooperation is appreciated, Doctor. We’ll be in touch regarding future meetings. Alana, why don’t you take him down to the cantina? They serve refreshments for all tastes.” He was good at keeping his tone polite, but the necromancer could feel the sharp point of his gaze.

“I’ve already eaten, but thank you for your consideration, Agent Crawford.” He bowed his head before rising again, his gaze washing over Will. “I look forward to working with you, Will. Stay safe in the meantime, hm?”

Alana followed his lead and the two consultants exited the office, the witch shooting him questioning looks as they departed, closing the door behind them.

The necromancer stayed rooted behind the chair, his hands gripping the fabric as he fought to keep himself in check. How easy it would have been to summon his book and finish off that bastard…

“Do you have something to tell me Will?” His boss inquired after a few moments of awkward silence.

He should have told him. He should have said something years ago… But it was too late now. It’s not like he had specific details anyway. Saying something now would only raise more questions- like why he hadn’t come forward in the first place.

Instead, he tried to bargain his way out of the situation. “I should be with the team instead of at this meeting. Agent Katz has gotten us a location and I’d be of more help-” His gaze stayed locked on the top of Jack’s desk, even as the other man interrupted him.

“Katz and her team have the angel case handled. Du Maurier has specifically asked for you to meet with her tomorrow evening.” He opened a drawer behind his desk and slid a thin case file towards the special agent. “Here’s what you need to know. A number of vampires and humans have gone missing and the covens are finally reaching out to the proper authorities to investigate the disappearances. Can I trust you to represent the bureau?”

He gave a stiff nod. “Yes sir.”

“Good, because I need you to get over whatever that was and get to work. I’m only going to say this once. Count Lecter has connections in important circles, Will, so make *nice*. At least until we know what we’re dealing with here. I need your head in the game, are we clear?”

“Crystal.”

Clearly done with his shit, Jack waved him away.

Pushing away from the chair he left the room and went looking for his temporary “partner”.

He found him out front, where Alana was grilling the Count.

“You didn’t tell me you knew Will.” He heard her quietly demand an answer.

“I didn’t know that information was relevant.” He replied smoothly.

“Why does he *hate* you? I’ve never seen him act like that before.”

“Because he’s a selfish leech that only exists to entertain himself.” Will cut in dryly.

Alana glanced between them in concern. “Will…”

Perhaps he should have felt guilty for shutting her out. He was too busy being angry. “Alana, if you could please give us a few minutes alone? I need to have a word with Count Lecter.”

Nodding slowly, she gave them one final look before leaving them be.

He waited for her to be out of earshot before he turned his glare back to Hannibal. “Why are you here?”

His smile was far too affectionate. “Alana invited me.”

“First you show up to my home and now to my *job*? Was I not clear enough the last time we spoke?”

A slight bow accompanied his hollow non-apology. “I realize this situation is less than desirable for you, Will, but I’m afraid things have gotten out of hand. Something needs to be done.” A placating hand reached out for him.

“Touch me and you lose that hand.” He hissed in warning. “What do you know about the missing fledglings?”

Obligingly he dropped his hand. “I don’t have much in the way of evidence, but I may have a lead.”

He raised a brow. “And?”

“And I’d be more than happy to tell you what I know over dinner.”

Scoffing loudly, Will shook his head. “Not a chance in hell.”

Those inviting lips ticked up in amusement. “It wasn't a suggestion. If you want the information I have you must have dinner with me- consider it a trade.”

He glared. “You’re fucking kidding me.”

“I’m not. I will be there to pick you up around sunset tomorrow and I’ll make reservations for after our meeting with Bedelia. Wear something nice.” He mused as his gaze drifted down to eye Will’s plaid and slacks.

It wasn’t too late to stab him, Will reminded himself as the Count bowed and smartly walked away from the enraged necromancer.

Staring up at the clouds, he wondered why the universe was testing him. He took his time outside, counting his breaths while he let the wave of frustration pass through him.

Chapter End Notes

Special shout out to my partner who is also my beta reader, without his support my writing wouldn’t make as much sense <3

As always, thank you for eyes~

All The World's A Stage

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The next day arrived, despite him willing the sun not to rise. Perhaps it was a self fulfilling prophecy, but his morning was shit. The team was preparing for a raid that he would not be attending because he had to play informant with a bunch of blood suckers.

After standing around at the headquarters, feeling like a jackass for a couple of hours, Jack dismissed him with a gruff, "If we need a summoning we'll call you."

For twenty more minutes he sat in his car in the parking lot, head resting on the steering wheel as he tried to clear his mind.

He could just go home, lay on the floor while the dogs trotted around him. There was fish in the freezer. Maybe a quick pan fried lunch-

Wait. The fucking brochure. He had shoved into a drawer the night before. The Baltimore Supernatural History museum. Had Hannibal left him a clue to investigate?

Pulling up the address on his GPS, he hit the road before he could talk himself out of it. Sure Hannibal could just be fucking with him- per usual- but checking out the museum could be worthwhile, and even if it wasn't, it was still better than him being stuck in his head waiting for sunset to fall.

Over an hour later he entered the building, paid for admission, and found himself surrounded by the articulated remains of long extinct creatures. Some were casted replicas, others still had wisps of spirit clinging to the bones.

He stopped before a noble griffin exhibit and felt a strange sense of guilt. They had been hunted to extinction; too many spellcasters required griffon parts for spells and now the world was without another majestic creature. This exhibit was made of replicas, most likely to discourage thieves.

An employee walked past him, dressed in a clean lab coat, muttering to herself as she flipped through pages crammed onto a clipboard.

Fuck it.

"Excuse me, ma'am?"

The woman- Amelia Gomez PhD, according to her name tag- stopped and raised a brow. "I'm sorry, I'm in a bit of a rush, perhaps you can find another member of the staff to help you?"

Will pulled out his badge. "Actually, I'm with the FBI," he flipped to his license. "Special agent necromancer, Will Graham. Do you have a moment?"

The woman paled. "*Oh*, oh dear. Are you here about Randall? Is he still missing?"

Keeping his disbelief off of his face, Will put his badge away. "Can you tell me what you know about Randall?"

She glanced around at the groups of school children taking tours. "Of course. Let's talk in my office." She led the way to the employees only area. "Randall stopped showing up to work a few weeks ago. I called his emergency contact, his mother, and she told me she hasn't been able to get ahold of him either."

Dr. Gomez's office was cluttered with boxes and papers; how she was able to find anything, Will would never know. Bending over she pulled open a filing cabinet and produced a file, handing it to the agent.

"Is it normal for Mr. Tier to be absent from work?" He asked while he skimmed the missing young man's information.

Slumping down into her chair, she ran a hand through messy curls. "Absolutely not. Randall's always been a quiet kid but he's been working here for the last three years and he almost never called out."

Will pulled out his phone and snapped a photo of his contact information and his headshot. "Before he went missing, did you notice any strange behavior? Did he seem anxious or nervous?"

She shook her head. "Like I said, he usually kept to himself. He was pretty normal during his last shift."

He handed her the file back, having taken enough photos for researching later. "Did Randall have a locker for his personal items? Could I take a look inside?"

"Yeah, sure. Give me a second to find the master key."

After digging through multiple draws, she finally found it and led the agent to the employee lockers. Taking a look, Will noted the locker was empty and devoid of any personal touches. "Has this locker already been searched?"

Dr. Gomez shrugged. "Not yet. His mother hasn't been by and you're the first officer to come asking about him. I was… holding out hope he was going to come back soon… He's not coming back, is he?" She asked softly.

"How long has it been since you last saw him?"

"Almost a month."

Yeah, probably not coming back. He was more than likely someone's midnight snack. Instead he said, "We'll do what we can to bring him home." He shut the locker door. "Thank you for your cooperation, Doctor."

"No problem officer. I just… hope he's okay."

“We’ll find out.” He assured them. He couldn’t promise the truth wouldn’t hurt.

Heading out of the museum, he was lost in his thoughts, trying to put the pieces of information together. Was the disappearance of Randall Tier related to the missing church members? Were *those* disappearances connected to the missing coven members? Surely one person couldn’t be responsible for so much-

As he stepped onto the sidewalk, he bumped shoulders with a passerby. “Oh, sorry, I need to watch where… I’m going…” Will thought *he* was an awkward bastard, but the man he bumped into just stared at him with crazed eyes.

Those sunken eyes bore into his soul, passing judgment down on Will, like he could see his sins through a feverish daze.

Shrugging off the feeling, Will frowned and reached a hand out to the man, because he really didn’t look okay. Had he escaped from a hospital or something? “Hey, buddy, are you-”

“The majesty of your becoming is near.” He breathed before stepping around Will and hurrying away.

“My *what*? Hey, wait a minute!” He chased after him, following him down an alleyway, shouting, “FBI, wait!”

Another turn and he was face first with a brick wall. A dead end. Turning around he searched for the man, but he was alone. The stranger had vanished, perhaps with a spell? He had definitely been human, but Will couldn’t guess what kind of magic he had.

He looked above him. Nothing. “Fuck.”

After the long drive home, Will wasted a few hours researching Randall Tier’s social media. It at least gave him something to do besides staring at the clock. Most of his accounts were set to private and what was public wasn’t that helpful. Kid seemed obsessed with prehistoric animals, but that wasn’t really shocking considering his career choice.

Hannibal arrived after sunset, just as he said he would. Will didn’t say a word as he opened the passenger door and climbed into the Bentley.

The blood sucker didn’t take the hint. “Good evening Will, I hope your day was productive.”

He merely grunted as he looked out the window, watching the farmland of Wolftrap pass them by as they turned onto the main road.

“My day was pleasant, thank you for asking.” He continued.

Something inside of him snapped. “Stop. Stop acting like nothing happened. I hate you and the only reason I’m here is because my boss ordered me to show up with you.”

Hannibal inclined his head. “My apologies. It isn’t my desire to make you uncomfortable. Alana is the one that introduced me to Agent Crawford-”

“She doesn’t know what you really are.” Will interrupted coldly, tired of the person suit. He would have muched preferred to face the bloody monster hiding away. At least then he could have a fight to the death instead of this horrible *small talk*.

He smiled in turn. “You’re welcome to tell her, if you’d like.”

Will balked.

“It’s strange you haven’t confided in anyone,” he continued on, “the FBI have stayed out of my affairs- clearly you never told your boss what you know.”

Will huffed. “Let me be clear. The only thing stopping me from ending your miserable existence is that it’d be way too suspicious if you disappeared right after meeting with me.”

Maroon eyes regarded him softly. “It would be my pleasure, Will, but regardless, you have my gratitude.”

He looked away sharply, returning his gaze to the window. “You can take your gratitude and shove it up your ass. I haven’t said anything to protect my own skin. I don’t give a damn what happens to you.”

“You cared once.”

“Don’t flatter yourself, I didn’t know better. I won’t be making that mistake again.”

He didn’t have to look to know the bastard was still smiling. At least he shut up for the rest of the drive.

When they drove up to the gate in front of the estate, a vampire in a security uniform looked surprised as Hannibal hit a button to roll down the window. “Good evening, we are here for our meeting with Bedelia.”

“Uh. Count Lecter, you’re…” He glanced down at a clipboard. “We weren’t given notice that you would be arriving tonight.”

Will leaned over and flashed his badge. “FBI.”

Red eyes glanced between the two of them. “Oh, Agent Graham. Please excuse me.” He stepped back into the security booth and picked up a phone and appeared to call someone. Probably Bedelia.

He gave Hannibal an annoyed look. “If you make us late…”

“Worry not, dear Will.”

The guard stepped back out and bowed to the two in the car. “Forgive the inconvenience, gentlemen. I’ll buzz you in now,” and stepped back in and did just that, the wrought iron gates shuddering as they slid open.

Hannibal shot him a self satisfied look.

Will just rolled his eyes as the bentley rolled onto the property, following a gravel path up to the main house

The Du Maurier estate was a group of large buildings sprawling over acres of land, meant to house one of the largest covens in the north east.

They were led up a few flights of stairs and through expansive hallways to the elder's private study.

Bedelia was waiting for them, face set in its usual glacier cold stare. "I don't remember inviting you, Hannibal."

He placed a hand over his still heart and offered a courteous bow. "I offered my services and the FBI accepted them."

Her gaze shifted to their guide. "Please escort Count Lecter to the gardens."

Will couldn't keep the smirk off his face as Hannibal followed the guide out of the room. He didn't bother protesting, but the slight tightening of his lips made the whole shitty day worth it.

"I specifically told Agent Crawford that I only wanted to speak to you," she griped in that icy tone, "with blunders like this the FBI shouldn't be surprised that the covens don't want them in their business."

Will lifted his hands in a placating gesture. "Believe me, I'm not happy he's here either. I tried to tell my boss it was a bad idea."

Turning her back to him, she walked to a small bar cart and uncorked a bottle of blood, pouring herself a glass. "I hadn't realized you two were speaking again. It's been quite some time since I've seen you together."

The first time Will had met Bedilia Du Maurier she had been the first fledgling of the Du Maurier clan. A few years later she became the new sire of the coven, after the original elder met an untimely end. There had been no evidence to convict anyone, but he certainly had his suspicions. Vampires couldn't help but be predictable.

"I keep telling him I hate him but he doesn't seem to be getting the message."

"He's always had a peculiar interest in magic users. Playing with them until they break or he loses interest. It's been like that for as long as I've known him, to everyone. Everyone except you." She tilted her head. "He's always had a unique attachment to you. I wonder why?"

Sufficiently uncomfortable with that thought, he changed the subject. "Why did you ask for me?"

She hummed and set down her glass. "As I'm sure you've heard, some fledglings and human prospects have gone missing. Not just in the Du Maurier coven, I've spoken with other elders and they're reporting losses as well. There seems to be a joint effort to pick off the young ones. We've done what we can to locate them- to no avail."

“If you have any personal items from the missing I can take them back and see if our diviner can locate them.” He offered.

“I will see what we can scrounge up.” She strolled up to him. “First, can *you* locate the dead?”

He shrugged his shoulders, not letting her close proximity bother him. “Sort of. If you can provide something to connect me to the soul I can try summoning them and asking if they know where they were before they died. I can only connect with human souls, however, so if it’s one of your fledglings you’re worried about I won’t be of much use.”

Bedelia stepped back towards the small bar cart and opened a door to a black mini fridge, producing a blood bag. “Will this do?”

He held out his hand to accept it. “Yeah, that should be enough. I’ll need the name of the human as well.”

“Her name is Katerina Beck.” She said carefully.

Will just nodded and tore open the bag, spilling some onto the carpet, before glancing back at the head of the coven. “Uh. Sorry for the mess.”

She waved away his apology. “Just do it.”

Summoning his necronomicon was easy enough with a fresh supply of blood. The blood floated out of the bag, some of it dissipating, absorbed by the magic glowing in the large room. He took a breath and spoke the soul summoning spell, focusing his energy on pulling the spirit back from the other side of the veil.

Except nothing happened.

There was nothing there to summon. He tried again, but even with the blood floating in front of him, no spirit appeared.

“Where is she?” Bedelia demanded.

Will waved his hand and his spellbook disappeared, along with the purple glow. The rest of the blood splattered to the floor. “Well, either she’s still alive or she’s been turned. I can’t reach her.”

Bedelia’s eyes shuttered closed for a moment, as still as a statue, before those cold eyes reopened, her composure returned. “I’ll have someone deliver items from the missing fledglings’ rooms for your diviner.” She said at last.

Will nodded his head. “Agent Katz is incredibly talented, I’m sure she’ll be able to get us closer to your missing coven members. Would you mind if I ask you some questions in regards to the others?”

She nodded once. “Go on.”

He pulled out a small note pad. “Can you think of anyone who would want to harm the Du Maurier clan?”

“We’ve been around for more than a millennium. You don’t survive this long without making a few enemies.”

He raised a brow. “Any specific names come to mind?”

She merely shrugged. “As other covens have been targeted, no. I can’t name someone who had qualms with all of us.”

“Okay… Would you be able to get us in contact with the other affected covens?”

Walking over to the desk she picked up her glass of blood. WIth her back to him she said, “No. The other covens do not want the FBI involved. I only contacted the agency because I knew you were employed there.”

Resisting an eye roll, Will pressed on. “Then would you provide a list of the targeted covens? Any information at all could help us catch those responsible.”

Turning around, she sipped the blood while she debated the request. “Fine. I will provide a list to Agent Crawford. Be sure to emphasize that I do not want it advertised that it came from me.”

“Done.”

“There’s one more thing.”

“Yes?” He ran a hand through his curls.

“Don’t mention her to Hannibal.”

“You have my word, this stays between us.”

“He uses your weaknesses against you. Try to remember that, Will.”

“You don’t have to tell me twice. I know what he’s capable of.” He paused, choosing his next words carefully. “Do you think he’s involved in the disappearances?”

“I wouldn’t put it past him,” she admitted, “but there have been too many that have gone missing. I’d hesitate to put all of the blame on one person. I suspect a group is behind this, whether it be another coven or even vampire hunters. There are many ways to describe Lecter; *team player* isn’t one of them.” She didn’t wait for him to respond, dismissing him with a, “Thank you for your services.”

Nodding, he turned and walked out of the room. Out in the hallway, a fledgling was waiting to guide him out of the mansion. Hannibal was waiting for him besides the Bentley.

“Fruitful meeting?” He asked cordially, as if he wasn’t miffed about being excluded.

“Wouldn’t you like to know.” He shot back, flashing a cruel smile as he pulled open his door, climbing in to avoid eye contact.

It didn’t have the intended effect. Instead of annoyance, maroon eyes softened. “I’m sure I’ll find out soon enough. Let’s get you to dinner, hm?” He popped the driver's side door open and slipped in.

Will steeled himself, needing to gather his patience to survive the rest of the evening.

The restaurant was one he had never heard of, but all of the staff, from the valet to the host and waiter staff knew Hannibal Lecter.

Walking through the main dining hall and up a flight of stairs, the agent surveyed the area, noting a large number of vampires dining- and the nearest exits.

The stairs led up to an isolated terrace, their table waiting for them, wrapped in the warm glow of fairy lights.

Will didn’t wait long after they were seated to demand, “Out with it. You said you’d tell me what you know.”

“No need to be so impatient, dear Will.” He chuckled as he opened the bloodwine list and perused the night’s offerings. “Let us at least enjoy our dinner first before we discuss business.”

WIll glared but reached for a menu. “Of fucking course you’re going to drag this out.”

Warm maroon eyes flickered up at him, asking *Did you expect anything less* ? “It has been years since we’ve been able to chat, please forgive my want to savor your attention again.”

Grimacing in disgust, he buried his face behind the absurd amount of pages. “The information you have better be worth my time.”

“I’ve heard the lobster bisque is to die for.”

Will happened to be on that page and glanced at the price. Yikes- though it did give him an idea.

When the waiter returned to take his order, he set down the menu. “I’d like the filet mignon, medium rare, please. I’d also like a side of the lobster mashed potatoes, the truffle duck fat fries, and the fried brussel sprouts,”

He didn’t miss the waiter’s dismayed face when his order wasn’t done yet. “I’d also like the Lobster Pasta, to go please. You know what? Go ahead and add some steak to that too. I’ll take the pork tenderloin as well.”

“To go, sir?” The waiter asked cautiously, glancing at Hannibal for reassurance.

The bastard looked far too amused when he suggested, “You should try the foie gras, it’s a decadent dish.”

Just like that the wind was sucked right out of his sails. He closed his menu with a snap. “Not interested in tortured goose liver, thanks. I’ll just have the stuffed quail- yes to go.”

“Anything to drink, sir? Besides water?”

Shooting his host a glare, he gave a curt, “No.”

“I’ll have a bottle of Sanguis Virginis, thank you.” Hannibal handed him back the menus.

Gross.

When the waiter disappeared back into the restaurant, the agent tried a different tactic.

“Have you ever heard of a vampire trying to embalm humans with their blood?”

He hummed. “Tell me Will, do you know the history of embalming?”

Holding in the urge to groan in frustration, he muttered, “How about we skip the lecture and cut to the part where you answer my question.”

A chuckle. “ *Yes* , I have heard of vampires using embalming equipment to turn their fledglings.”

Finally, a straight answer. “Does it increase the likelihood of a successful turn?”

“I’m afraid I don’t have solid statistics to answer that question. I only know that certain elders used the technology for ill soon after its conception.”

“This is turning into a history lesson, isn’t it.”

“The civil war saw the birth of modern day embalming-“

“There it is.”

He continued on despite Will’s grumbling. “Soldiers from both sides of the conflict experienced casualties. A clever field doctor began embalming soldiers with chemical cocktails to keep decay at bay while the deceased was transported across the country to their families. Soon embalmers became the new vultures of the battlefields. It wasn’t uncommon for them to hold bodies hostage in exchange for payment of services no one asked for.”

“Wow. Terrible.” He mumbled into his hand as his eyes searched for their waiter.

“Among those embalmers, a few vampires came together and started preying on the unfortunate souls that found themselves left for dead among the corpses.”

Will turned his head back to the vampire, brow raised.

A small, victorious smile ticked up those smug lips as he continued, “Using the war as a distraction, a group of vampires tried to build an army of fledglings to topple the mortal controlled government.”

Searching his eyes, he found himself taking the bait- for the case, of course. “Let me guess. They were from the south.”

“A sound observation. I do recall a number of them being plantation owners.” Hannibal’s gaze was locked onto Will, even as the waiter returned with the bloodwine and Will’s food, he didn’t even acknowledge the presence, just accepted his filled glass and continued on.

Being rude.

A chill ran down his back. The door Hannibal had opened… He still didn’t know what was waiting for him on the other side, through the darkness.

“… But you’re aware of how entitled the wealthy of the south could be.” Shit. He was still talking- “With their army they planned on wiping out both the union and the confederacy.”

“Considering we never talked about this attempted coup in history classes, I’m assuming they failed miserably?” He picked up his drink.

He inclined his head. “Naturally. An army of fledglings sounds advantageous until you need to feed all of them. It’s hard finding that much blood *and* taking it without anyone noticing.”

He narrowed his eyes. “You were in the war. Did you consider joining them? Starting a new world order?”

He swirled his glass. “Yes I came to hear about this plan while I was on the field. No, I didn't join them.”

“Oh? Total power too boring for you?” He snorted.

His eyes glittered as he flashed a fang. “There’s no sport in keeping game in cages.”

Lips curling in disgust Will shrank back. “Yeah, where’s the fun in that.”

Mimicking his motions, Hannibal straightened in his chair. “While you may not have heard of the elders’ coup, you have certainly heard of the vampiric rights act of 1870. The reason for the rather progressive bill at the time is attributed to the rise in vampires in the population. Without a coven to bind them, after the war many of those unwilling vampires returned home to their families. It led to a rise in social infrastructure to feed these fledglings and the creation of legal *fledgling consent* .”

Will waved his hand dismissively. “What happened to the vampires that created the mess?”

A little smirk. “Tried for treason. Sentenced to death by sunlight. If they were truly elders, that would have been a long burn, but it is an effective method.”

He raised a brow. “That how you killed your sire?”

There was no falter, no pause as Hannibal calmly answered. “Not exactly. That would have been too kind.”

Rolling his eyes he drank his water. “Were all of the perpetrators sentenced to death?”

“As far as I know. If any survived they’ve been quiet.”

“Gentlemen, your dinner.”

Will began to regret his schemes as an egregious number of plates were put before him- with more to come.

Oops. How was he going to get all of this home?

Hannibal smirked at him over his glass.

Maybe he could spill some of the mashed potatoes in the Bentley. A little food waste could be allowed if it gave him some small amount of vengeance.

“No need to stand on ceremony, Will, dig in.”

At least if he was stuck here until Hannibal’s game was over he’d have good food. On Hannibal’s dime. He ate.

Hannibal watched far too intently, all while, polishing off the bottle of blood.

He finished one entree and asked for the rest of his order, a wave of nausea hitting him.

The waiter stoically stepped away to grab the check.

“Thank you for your continued patronage, Dr. Lector.” He did a little bow and everything.

How much did one of those bottles of bloodwine cost?

Hannibal retrieved his card and stood up. “Shall we?”

Begrudgingly, he gathered up his to-go containers and followed him out to the car.

After taking his keys back from the valet, Hannibal held the back door for him to dump his assortment of bags and styrofoam containers on the back seat. He then opened the passenger’s side door, beating the valet.

Will exhaled a breath through his nose as he got in. Soon. Soon this night would be over.

Without starting a GPS, Hannibal took off from the restaurant.

“Where are we going?”

“To your home, of course. You’ll need to refrigerate those leftovers.”

“Are you going to tell me the information?”

“I gave you my word I would.” Was all he said, his eyes fixed on the road.

“But you’re stalling.”

“I am.”

He huffed and looked out the window.

“I severed his limbs and fed them to him before I cracked open his skull and let the sun consume what was left.”

Will froze.

“You’ve asked me before. There’s your answer.”

While he knew him, Hannibal rarely spoke about his sire. This was the third time they had spoken about the subject.

He almost turned around. He almost asked another question.

But it didn’t matter. He didn’t care anymore.

The rest of the ride home was silent.

When they finally made it back to the house, Hannibal turned off the car and turned to him. “An old patient of mine recently found me and asked me to join his coven.”

Finally ! He faced the blood sucker. “Was it Randall Tier?”

Warmth flooded those murderous eyes. “You went to the museum.”

“What did Mr. Tier say to you?”

“He said he’d found a coven to accept him and that they would welcome me as well. I declined. He seemed rather upset at the rejection.”

“Was he alone?”

“No, he came with another man, one I had never met before.”

“Was Randall human when you treated him?”

“He was, though I always suspected he’d join a pack, not a coven.”

Will frowned. “What’s the name of the coven?”

“I don’t know.”

He threw his hand up. “And how does this tie into the investigation?”

“I’m not sure yet. It was a peculiar interaction.”

Will threw open the car door. “I am done with this game, Hannibal. You’ve wasted enough of my time.” He growled before storming out. It wasn’t uncommon for young adults to run away from home to join covens, romanticizing eternal life and found families. He didn’t need Hannibal to find the truth of Randall’s turning.

“Don’t forget the food, Will.” He chimed back, staying put.

He marched to the back passenger door and threw it open, grabbing the bags.

Looking over his shoulder, Hannibal spoke. “Keep your doors locked.”

Not bothering to dignify that with a response, he slammed the car door and stalked back to his house.

The Bentley took its sweet time going the fuck away, but it didn’t matter. Will put away his leftovers and went to bed.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is finally done! Thank you so much for your patience, I hope you enjoyed the update ♥

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

> Please mind updated tags, new content disclaimers have been added~
>
> Thank you for your patience, life got in the way of my writing for a bit but I did get engaged!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Coffee in hand, Will showed up to the headquarters early, zooming straight to Beverly's lab.

"Hey you," she chirped, glancing up from her computer screen. "How are you and Norm?"

He blinked. "Norm?" Was that some reference to Hannibal he wasn't understanding?

"Your Necronomicon. I've decided their name is Norm. The Nerco-Norm-icon."

"I… *Why* ?" He asked, dumbfounded.

"They recognize you, yeah? Then they deserve a name."

Lifting his thermos to his mouth, he just stared at her. There were so many things off about that, he didn't know where to start. The musty smell of his childhood basement drifted through his mind unbidden, mingling with the tang of blood from his father's lessons.

She laughed.

Glad someone here was having a good time.

"How did the raid go?" He asked, needing the play-by-play.

Beverly's face scrunched into a pained look. She already looked pallid under the lab's fluorescent lighting, the weary look on her face highlighting the dark bags under her eyes. "I'd rather hear how the assignment with your ex went."

Ice flushed through his veins. "He's *not* my *ex* ."

She flashed her palms playcatingly. "Shoot, well. Guess I just lost twenty bucks to Zeller."

They were betting money on what his relationship with that monster was? "That's fucked. No. Lecter and I have never dated."

She tilted her head. "Then how do you two know each other?"'

“We were friends. Confidants.” Hannibal interjected, slinking out from his eavesdropping spot in the hall.

Refusing to flinch, Will kept his glare fixed to Bev’s shoulder as Hannibal flounced to the center of the room, smiling like a cat with a mouse. “Yeah. Maybe at one point. Then you turned out to be such a pri-”

“Graham!” Jack growled a warning, striding in next.

“-Pleasure to be around.” He amended dryly, stepping back towards Bev, keeping distance between him and the vampire. “Morning Jack.”

Holding the door for the other two agents, Jack wasted no time getting down to business. “Now that everyone is here, please give your report on yesterday’s meeting with Bedelia.”

Will handed him the folder he’d stayed up late preparing. “Du Marier is reporting multiple fledglings and potential humans of her coven have gone missing. She agreed to send personal items for the purpose of divining their locations.”

The silence was tense as Jack flipped through his notes, expression firm.

“Any possible leads?” He asked finally.

“None she was willing to name. I requested a list of other affected covens but we’ll see if she follows through.” He pointedly ignored Hannibal’s gaze.

A stiff nod. “Katz, please tell me you have something.”

That didn’t sound good. He looked at Bev, noting her hesitation.

Sucking in a breath through her teeth, she pulled up evidence photos on the projector. “The building was wiped clean.”

Taking in the photos of empty rooms, something nagged at the back of his skull.

“We did manage to match the carpet fibers found in this commercial space,” a photo of a small door mat was shown next, two fiber samples taped to the image. “This old mat was found in the third basement level. The floors are laminated concrete and we haven't found any traces of blood yet. The warehouses nearby are being searched but so far nothing unusual has been found.”

The majesty of your becoming is near , echoed in his ears. Shit.

“Keep me posted on any updates Katz.” Their boss grunted. “Till then, can *anybody* give me something? How are dozens of people disappearing without a trace?”

His gaze darted around the faces of his colleagues.

Nothing.

Price opened his mouth- no doubt to give a chirp of encouragement- but Hannibal beat him to it.

“I don’t suppose Lady Du Marier mentioned the meeting of Elders in a few days, did she?” He asked innocently.

Will froze.

Jack’s intense gaze shot from Hannibal to Will, demanding an answer.

“No.” He grumbled reluctantly. “No, she didn’t. Are they discussing the case?”

“I believe that is the reason for the impromptu gathering. Of course, as an Elder myself I have been invited.”

Fuck.

“Would you be willing to disclose what you hear at this meeting?”

“I can do you one better. It’s common practice to bring a close fledgling as a plus one.” Those maroon eyes stayed fixed on him.

“Perfect. Will, you’ll be attending the gathering.”

“Why can’t Katz be the informant?” He spat past gritted teeth.

Of course, Hannibal had the perfect response. “There will be suspicion if they detect any deceit. The charade would be much easier to pull off with someone I am familiar with.”

“Would he be able to take a wire?” Jack asked.

The conversation continued on despite his bitter glare. He wished he hadn’t seen the smug glances from Zeller and Price.

“I wouldn’t recommend it. If it is noticed they will be less likely to speak plainly.”

He nodded sagely. “It’s settled then. We’ll prep a small stake out team as back up. Is the meeting location already decided?”

“Yes, it’s…”

Their conversation was drowned out by the sound of blood rushing in his ears, so he turned his gaze to the fuzzy projector image of the empty warehouse. Katz’s divining was rarely wrong… Did following Hannibal’s vague clues tip off their perp? The pieces weren’t lining up and any time they got close to a connection someone flipped the table.

The soft brush of fingers against his elbow shocked him out of his reprieve. “Will?” Katz’s dark eyebrows were furrowed in concern. “You good?”

Blinking, he looked around the cleared room. “I…” How long ago had the meeting ended? He quickly scrubbed his face. “Yes, I just… Didn’t really sleep last night. You know how long those reports can take.”

Her smile was soft, the dark circles under her eyes sympathetic to his. “I could use your help here, if you’re not busy. I know we’re missing something, my spell brought us to that building for a reason.”

Needing to drown the little voice in his head telling him he’d fucked up, he agreed. Even though it was mind numbing, the hours dripped by as he combed through every photo, every swab sample.

They didn’t find anything of worth. When one in the morning rolled around, Katz sent him home, saying she would be following him out soon enough. It was a clear lie, but the dogs needed to be let out so he obliged. It was way past their dinner time.

Countryside blurred past him as he followed the long road home.

He needed to tell Jack about Randall. Maybe they could get a warrant to search his home, or they could interview his mother about the disappearance.

Silence followed the cut of his engines as he removed the keys.

No barking.

Two bodies, one with a pulse the other without, were inside his wards.

Maybe he was getting answers sooner than he expected.

Pulling the gilded molar from his pocket and sliding it on, he got out of the car and threw open the front door.

Two familiar faces turned to greet him. The sickly guy he ran into outside the museum stood in the kitchen, scarfing down the leftovers in front of an open fridge door.

Randall Tier stood in the living room, Winston’s collar dangling in his hand, the rune no longer glowing. Winston lay still on the ground in front of him- body broken in two pieces.

In the other room, the rest of the dogs cowered around and under his bed.

“You attacked my dog.” His words rang hollow in his ears, like they came from someone else’s lips.

“He got in the way.” Randall sneered, flashing fangs as he tossed the collar aside.

He barely registered the dull pain of his own fingernails digging into his palms as his hands curled into fists, attempting to still the tremors of rage that threatened to consume him. “Whatever business you have with me, you leave them out of it.” He warned.

“Our sire would like a word with you, Will Graham. Come along quietly and we’ll leave the rest of them be.” Tier held himself like a juvenile predator- growing into his talons and fangs as well as limits. Cocky, but there was something else behind that arrogance.

“And what would we be discussing?” His voice steady, he kept both men in his line of sight. Randall could keep his fantasy of being an apex predator for just a little longer.

The vampire took a step closer, attempting to lord over him despite his thin frame. “That’s up to you to find out, isn't it?”

Will looked him over and cocked a brow. “Your sire is really willing to turn anyone off the street, huh?”

Lips curling back, he hissed, “Come again?”

“Now I see why Hannibal didn’t want anything to do with you,” he smirked. “I can smell the desperation coming off of you.”

In the blink of an eye the fledgling pounced, crowding so close their noses touched, eyes glowing red. “You’re one to talk. I can smell his scent all over your property!”

Frustrating- but it did confirm two of his suspicions. He’d deal with Hannibal later, for now he took Randall’s barely restrained anger as confirmation his boss wanted him delivered alive.

“Unfortunately for me, he seems to be one of those old farts that think ‘no’ means ‘yes’. Maybe if you hadn’t been so clingy a pack would have taken you in.”

His eyes narrowed. “We’ll see how smug you are after our sire is done with you.” Taking a step back, he nodded sharply at his companion.

The other human raised his hand, wiggling his fingers as he prepared to cast a spell, swallowing a mouthful of quail.

“You know,” Will said lowly, “It doesn’t take much for me to establish a bond with a soul.” He activated the rune on the ring, summoning the soul of Quinton besides the human, who proceeded to slam the head of his would-be kidnapper against the side of the fridge. Again and again. The leftovers fell to the ground, splattering across the floor. Will spoke over the surprised choking noises, “All I need is a fragment. A little carpal bone here, a molar there.”

“Elliot!” Randall shouted as the soul relentlessly continued until blood splattered across the fridge. At the first wet crack, the fledgling’s pupils dilated, locking onto the scarlet droplets as Elliot gurgled incoherently and slid to the ground.

Blood lust set in so strongly he didn’t intervene as Will summoned his spellbook and shouted the command to raise an army of souls around Randall. The fledgling stepped through the crowd, wrestling against his nature, yet unable to resist the draw of the fresh blood floating up and fueling his spell.

Keeping his front towards his foe, the necromancer began walking backwards toward the stairs to the basement. “You can’t even complete a simple task, you’re useless Randall. It’s only a matter of time before your sire realizes you were a mistake.”

He was already at the top step when the goading registered, the fledgling turning on his heels and charged-

Only to be braced by the spirits. Bewildered, that red gaze burned through him. “How?!”

Will shrugged as he continued down the stairs, “I may not be strong enough to deal with you myself, but the dead have plenty of power to give. The blood sacrifice of your friend certainly helps.”

“You won’t stop me, bastard!” Randall snarled and threw his weight behind each step, dragging the souls with him as his superhuman strength spurred him forward.

Exactly what he was banking on. He just needed to reach the basement first. Jumping over the cot and kicking the lamp on the floor through the dark basement level, Will’s hand reached for the light switch on the back wall-

Just as the touch of cold fingers gripped the back of his shirt he flipped the switch.

Randall’s screams reached his ears before the smell of burning flesh reached his nose as the rows of industrial UV lights in the ceiling buzzed to life.

The fledgling turned away, trying to make a break for the stairs but Will commanded his souls to hold his scorched form in place.

The necromancer shielded his eyes and watched as Randall’s cries devolved into the whimpers then silence before his charred corpse collapsed into a pile of ash on the concrete slab.

Only then did Will flip the lights off.

He walked up the stairs, his book floating behind him- ready for anything-

Except for the empty kitchen and the open front door.

The kitchen was at least blood free- every drop consumed by his magic, though that didn't make him feel any better.

Standing there in his living room he knew he needed to call Jack. Evidence needed to be collected and his statement recorded.

He stared at his phone, thumb hovering over the call button…

His gaze fell to Winston, broken on the floor.

Turning the screen off, he shoved the device into his pocket and took a few steadying breaths.

“Sorry boy,” didn’t begin to cover it, but this was something he could fix. Walking over to his fishing lure set up he grabbed a spool of wire and a pair of pliers and got to work putting his loyal companion back together again with a practiced ease.

When he finished he picked up the collar and swiped his thumb across the blood dripping from his nose, rubbing his thumb over the rune till it activated. The purple glow illuminating his fingers as he clipped it around Winston’s neck. Instantly the glow returned to the dog’s eyes and his head snapped up, behind Will, out the door.

He didn’t need to turn around to see who it was. He didn’t expect the heavy thud or the groaning, however.

Looking over his shoulder, he found Hannibal standing in the threshold of the front door, Elliot lying at his feet- the human’s legs bent and broken in several places, blood drying on his face.

Chapter End Notes

You have no idea how long I’ve been sitting on that “Norm” joke.

Please let me know if there are any tags you would like to see added, I know dead animals are a touchy subject for many and I want to make sure my writing is properly tagged.

Thanks for stopping by, comments, bookmarks and kudos are always appreciated and help keep the creative juices flowing.

Happy Holidays~

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